

Message

From: Charmley, William [/O=EXCHANGELABS/OU=EXCHANGE ADMINISTRATIVE GROUP (FYDIBOHF23SPDLT)/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=FB1828FB00AF42FFB68B9E0A71626D95-CHARMLEY, WILLIAM]
Sent: 6/1/2017 2:22:39 PM
To: Bunker, Byron [bunker.byron@epa.gov]
Subject: FW: No 'next steps' on vehicle standards

From: Hengst, Benjamin
Sent: Wednesday, May 31, 2017 4:20 PM
To: Grundler, Christopher <grundler.christopher@epa.gov>
Cc: Charmley, William <charmley.william@epa.gov>; Simon, Karl <Simon.Karl@epa.gov>; Cook, Leila <cook.leila@epa.gov>; Birgfeld, Erin <Birgfeld.Erin@epa.gov>
Subject: No 'next steps' on vehicle standards

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EPA

No 'next steps' on vehicle standards

Camille von Kaenel, E&E News reporter

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The Trump administration has yet to settle on the "next steps" for a review of tailpipe emissions requirements, a top U.S. EPA official said today.

Chris Grundler, director of EPA's Office of Transportation and Air Quality, told an advisory board of industry and environmental representatives this morning that his team had not yet "had the time" to brief Administrator Scott Pruitt on the greenhouse gas standards.

In March, following automaker concerns about compliance, President Trump announced his administration would reconsider the gas tailpipe requirements and gather more data about their economic impact.

But carmakers are split on whether and to what degree the requirements should be loosened. The major trade lobbies have said they want to see the rules smoothed out, not significantly rolled back.

As evidence of the early nature of the deliberations, the White House has not yet begun negotiations between federal agencies, like EPA and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, and California's Air Resources Board, Grundler said.

Also, Trump has not yet nominated someone to lead NHTSA or EPA's Office of Air and Radiation. Grundler is a career staffer.

"Both agencies are in transition," Grundler told reporters on the sidelines of a meeting of the Mobile Sources Technical Review Subcommittee. "We don't want to rush."

Pruitt and Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao, who is taking a greater role in helping review the standards, have had initial meetings with automakers. EPA aides have also started compiling new data.

Former EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy attempted to lock in the pollution mandates during her final days in office by releasing them more than a year ahead of schedule.

Her team cited a massive technical report, which found the requirements were feasible and projected to bring average fleetwide fuel economy to around 50.8 mpg by 2025.

Pruitt has not yet agreed to a briefing on the vehicle emissions rules. He has met with aides on the renewable fuel standard and urged them to meet an upcoming November deadline.

Today was the first time the outside group of experts convened during the Trump administration. EPA has dropped some scientific advisers in an effort to seek more industry input.

But the Mobile Sources subcommittee is not expected to see any shakeup. It has long included representatives from the auto sector, including Ford Motor Co., General Motors Co. and the Hyundai Group.

Defeat devices, Calif. waivers

Following the Volkswagen scandal, EPA has expanded its testing of vehicles at its lab in Ann Arbor, Mich. Grundler said the goal was to be more "unpredictable."

EPA engineers test vehicles before production, off the production line and when they're in use. In addition to laboratory tests, the agency is also now conducting on-the-road analysis using portable devices and other methods Grundler wished to keep secret.

As a result, EPA said, it discovered Fiat Chrysler used undisclosed "defeat devices" on more than 100,000 diesel trucks. The Justice Department sued the automaker last week.

Grundler also clarified in an interview that EPA was not reviewing California's special authority to set more stringent emissions requirements.

In a court filing earlier this month, the Justice Department wrote that "recently-appointed EPA officials" are "closely scrutinizing" the previous administration's decision to grant California a waiver under the Clean Air Act to impose requirements on forklifts, bulldozers, lawn mowers and other diesel equipment in excess of federal standards for particulate matter and nitrogen oxides.

California officials and environmentalists are concerned the new administration could eventually go after a separate existing waiver that lets the state set rules for cars and trucks and mandate sales of zero-emissions vehicles.

Grundler told reporters today there is no active review of any of California's waivers. "The agency just bought itself some time," he said.

Grundler also said his staff had not yet had time to fully review the thousands of comments from the general public and industry on which regulations to cut or change, but said aides were hoping to present agency officials with ideas on how to streamline regulations for fuels.

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